

MINUTES

ENVIRONMENTAL SCOPING MEETING

October 17, 2001

**PULASKI COUNTY, ITEM NO. 8-59.20
SOMERSET NORTHERN BYPASS, I-66
FROM CUMBERLAND PARKWAY AT FISHING CREEK
EAST TO KY 80 NEAR SUGAR HILL
PHASE I & ENVIRONMENTAL**

- A. An Environmental Scoping Meeting was held in the Frankfort Central Office, Training Room B, at 1:00 pm. Attending were:

Roger Coffey	Chief District Engineer, District 8
David Kratt	Branch Mgr, Div of Design, I-66 Coordinator
David Beattie	District 8, Pre-Construction Engineer
Joe Cox	District 8, Pre-Construction
Cathi Blair	District 8, Environmental Coordinator
Olivia Michael	FHWA
Mary Murray	FHWA
Gary Coleman	US Forestry Service
Brainard Palmer-Ball, Jr.	KSNPC, Nature Conservancy
Rob Miller	KY Division of Water
Alex Barlen	NREPC/DEP
Steve Rice	KTC DEA
Randall Thomas	KTC DEA
Mike Bruce	Johnson, Depp & Quisenberry, Design
Paul Biggers	Johnson, Depp & Quisenberry, Environment

B. DISCUSSION.

1. Cathi Blair began the meeting and distributed an Agenda.
2. David Kratt explained the Kentucky Transportation Cabinet's Road Building process, steps and timelines. A handout was provided.
3. Mike Bruce pointed out the study corridor, the corridor limits and the crossroads using the aerial photograph exhibit.
4. David Beattie then explained the Purpose and Need for the project:
 - a. The connectivity of the system and linkage to state routes and I-66 across the southern part of the state.
 - b. As a bypass around the north of Somerset to complete a route circumventing Somerset.
 - c. Although the road is destined to become a part of I-66 it has intrinsic value of its own as a bypass north of Somerset.
 - d. The Southwest Bypass is scheduled for construction in the Spring of 2003. US 27

Relocation right of way purchases should begin in April 2002.

5. Paul Biggers explained another purpose of the meeting was to determine agency input and jurisdiction. He requested that information from the agencies represented.
 - a. The study will be conducted as an EIS but may be downgraded to an EA if warranted.
6. Agency input began with Gary Coleman, USFS.
 - a. Representing the forest service lands and minerals which is more concerned with the I-66 corridor through the Daniel Boone National Forest.
 - b. USFS has no jurisdiction and no special expertise on this project.
 - c. Their interest is in how the eastern terminus of the bypass might affect the continuation of the I-66 alignment.
 - d. Suggested contacting the Native American tribes, Jerry Stevens is the Somerset District Ranger and is with the Cherokee Nation.
 - e. Also suggested contacting the Nature Conservancy and KY Natural Preserves.
7. Brainard Palmer said he did not have regulatory authority in the project area.
 - a. Rare species should be examined.
 - b. This section of the proposed I-66 corridor does not have hot issues.
 - c. Karst topography should be studied. Some caves were identified in the planning study but there may be a lot of unknown caves in the area. Contact Lee Florea, a hydrogeologist with KDNR. He has funding, along with A WKU professor, to study caves in this area. Olivia Michael suggested contacting Mammoth Cave and UK biologists as well.
 - d. A more conservative approach to highway development may be questioned. In particular, the option to upgrade existing KY 80 to interstate standards rather than building a new road.
8. Rob Miller, KY Division of Water, is the Watershed Coordinator for the Upper Cumberland River.
 - a. The agency is regulatory however his position is not. No special resources to offer.
 - b. A portion of Pitman Creek, probably a lower segment, has been declared an impaired stream. The long range impacts to Pitman Creek should be considered.
 - c. A list of impaired/degraded streams could be provided for use in mitigation of affected natural streams. These streams should have water quality, bank erosion and channel problems – not just water quality problems.
 - d. State DEA handles FEMA No-Rise certifications.
9. Alex Barlen, NREPC/DEP, is the State Environmental Review Officer – managing the clearinghouse for NEPA projects for all state agencies – water, air, waste, conservation, forestry, parks, heritage, military affairs, health, fish and wildlife, etc. Not federal or local agencies.
 - a. Send 17 copies of documents to his office and get a response from each affected agency in the State.

- b. The Governor's Task Force on "Smart Growth" met this summer. Their first draft report will be presented at the Environmental Conference being held at the Embassy Suites in Lexington during the morning session on October 31.
- 10. Steve Rice, KTC DEA, works with Keith Crim on submitting 404/401 permits to KDNR.
 - a. Performs the biology reviews of the ecological base studies. Three copies of each base study will be needed for the six reviewers working in pairs.
 - b. T.H.E. should meet with DEA to review their proposed sampling schedule.
 - c. Permits (401) are required for dredge or fill of blueline streams, for channel changes or long culverts (200 feet) on streams with drainage areas greater than 250 acres. State agency criteria are more difficult than the Corps of Engineers criteria.
 - d. Karst Committee with Keith Crim is developing guides for dealing with Karst areas. Also involved in the study are Joe Ray, a groundwater expert, and the KY Transportation Center.
 - e. Questioned whether DEA or JDQ/THE will be doing the bio-assessment if endangered species are encountered.
- 11. Randall Thomas, KTC DEA, works with the project team to coordinate the EIS. Depending on the project timing he may not be the coordinator on the is project.
 - a. Those assembled agreed that piecemeal review of the environmental documents, submitted by email, would be the most efficient way to address this project.
- 12. Olivia Michael, FHWA, former environmental document reviewer.
 - a. Recommended checking for waste sites and checking the highly sensitive areas footprint for blueline streams, cultural locations and Karst topography.
- 13. Mary Murray, FHWA, Area Engineer for this project.
- 14. Notice of Intent (NOI). The draft has been submitted to FHWA and after some minor changes will be sent for printing in the Federal Register in about two weeks. Barlen said that he does not have to wait for the Federal Register. He could distribute the information based on the draft copy.

Addendum to Scoping Meeting Minutes

Subsequent to the Scoping Meeting held in October 2001, a joint decision between the FHWA and the KYTC was made to proceed with the study as an EA. As a result, this study was advertised as an EA in the Notice of Intent that ran in the Federal Register on April 29, 2002.